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MEDIA RELEASE

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Hospital Board Takes Its Hat Off to Dynamic Individuals

It was an evening of celebration and recognition at the annual Board of Directors Holiday Social of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance, held recently at Copperfield's Bistro in Strathroy.

"This evening, not only are we celebrating the holiday season, we are here to recognize individuals who have made tremendous contributions to the MHA," Yvonne Lambert, chair of the MHA Board of Directors, said. The event was attended by the Directors of the Board, members of the FCHS and SMGH Foundation Boards, physicians and guests.

The MHA recently launched a Hats Off Recognition Program to acknowledge both staff and volunteers who 'make a difference,' Lambert said. One of the Hats Off awards is a Directors Award, the recipient of which is nominated by the Board and considered by the Governance Committee. "This year's Directors Award recognizes four people who played a significant role in one of two initiatives: the creation of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance itself, and the recent \$15M renovation and expansion project at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH). These four recipients are Marcel Beaubien, John Kavelaars, David Powell and Paul Van Bilsen," she said.

Marcel Beaubien, MPP of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, managed to obtain \$7.5M and approval from the provincial government to begin the renovations of SMGH. "Marcel was one of the most informed MPPs when it came to healthcare and was very aware of new initiatives introduced in healthcare such as the Nurse Practitioner Program at FCHS," Lambert said.

John Kavelaars was a Four Counties Health Services Board member when discussions to form the Alliance began. He consistently maintained the vision of cooperation and mutual respect during a sometimes challenging project. John currently is a Board member with the Four Counties Foundation.

David Powell was the last Board Chair for SMGH and one of the founders of the Joint Executive Committee which became the Middlesex Hospital Alliance Board. He also led the planning process for the 23,000 sq/ft expansion at SMGH and was instrumental in the initial fundraising for this construction. The expansion has benefited the entire MHA with increased space for additional services and programs, including the CT Scanner suite, a growing orthopaedic program and the Diabetes Education Centre.

Paul Van Bilsen, in his role as Board Chair at FCCHS, helped Four Counties through some difficult times during the formation of the Alliance. He steered the corporation through many events including a town hall meeting and an Annual General Meeting. Paul has been an active participant in the MHA CT Campaign for the West and is currently a member of the Local Advisory Committee, Four Counties Health Services site.

The evening also recognized long-term Board member, Cheryl Waters, who last June completed a term of nine years serving on both the SMGH and the MHA Boards. "Actually she served more than that as she previously represented the Hospital Auxiliary on the Strathroy Hospital Board," Lambert pointed out. Cheryl was Treasurer and served for several years on the Finance committee. "I want to thank Cheryl for being such a strong Ambassador for the Board of Directors of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance," Lambert said.

Lambert extended holiday greetings to all of the individuals who have given service to the MHA through their work with the boards and foundations. Said Lambert, "We are fortunate to have such dynamic individuals in our region. People who have tirelessly volunteered their time, skills and energy towards building the MHA into the community-focused healthcare centre that it is today."